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C O N F I D E N T I A L ZAGREB 000155

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NP/RA:SONTAG; EUR/SCE:KABUMOTO

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TAGS: [KNNP](#) [KTIA](#) [PARM](#) [MNUC](#) [PHSA](#) [PREL](#) [HR](#) [NATO](#)

SUBJECT: PSI: CROATIA SOON READY TO CONSULT ON OPERATIONAL AND LEGAL ISSUES

REF: STATE 8961

Classified By: Poloff Justin Friedman, reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶1. (C) Poloff and DATT delivered reftel demarche to MFA North America Office Director Andrea Bekic and Multilateral Affairs Office Director Marina Vasilj on January 19. Bekic responded that the legal review of the draft bilateral shipboarding agreement was near completion and that interministerial consultations would begin shortly. Bekic stressed that the GoC fully supported completing the shipboarding agreement; the only issue would be the time to complete the interministerial process. Vasilj had told us previously that the draft text was largely acceptable; the only issue that needed work was how to accommodate Croatia's declaration of an exclusive economic zone.

¶2. (C) Bekic said that the GoC saw many potential opportunities for military cooperation, both with PSI and bilaterally with the U.S. She said that the GoC interagency PSI coordination group would meet in the coming week to take initial steps to clarify PSI operational points of contact. She and Vasilj urged that the U.S. recognize Croatia's broader efforts on non-proliferation, including the creation of a dual-use export control legal and regulatory mechanisms, in reviewing Croatia's requests to join multilateral non-proliferation regimes like Wassenaar, MTCR, and the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

¶3. (C) Poloff and DATT also delivered reftel demarche the same day to Assistant Minister of Defense for Policy Jelena Grcic-Polic. Grcic-Polic was more cautious about the time needed to complete interagency review of the shipboarding agreement. Although she acknowledged that she was not well versed on the issue, she cautioned that accommodating the differences between Anglo-Saxon and Continental legal traditions could delay the interagency review of the agreement. COMMENT: Although we take the MFA's optimistic projection for completing the shipboarding agreement review as well-intentioned, Grcic-Polic may be correct about the time required for the key action Ministries' lawyers to prepare for negotiations.

FRANK

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